Castro as The U.S. Tito

Nixon and Kennedy in Demagogic Accord on America's Most Urgent Foreign Policy Problem

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Both Parties for Welfare State at Home—Why Not In Cuba?

On the surface, if one took rhetoric only into account, the issues in Cuba and the United States would seem to be much the same. The young men contending for the Presidency here, like the Fidelistas in Cuba, stress two issues in their speeches —freedom and economic growth. But while Cuba is governed by a group of young men who risked their lives to overthrow a tyranny and now risk their futures on a program designed to speed the economic growth of Cuba, the two young men competing for the White House have never shown a readiness to die for anything. Youth is supposed to be a time of idealism and passion but neither Richard Nixon nor John Kennedy has given signs of caring deeply about anything but their political advancement. If they ever head for the mountains, it will only be for vacation. The contrast is as strong on the question of economic growth, which for Cuba literally means shoes for the barefoot but for us seems to mean only keeping ahead of the Russians, perhaps by building three instead of two-car garages. While these two young men are supposed to be locked in a fierce conflict, the main issue of which is a more intelligent handling of our foreign relations, their acceptance speeches seemed alike in their incomprehension and belligerency on the subject of Cuba where (according to Kennedy) Communist influence "now festers some 90 miles off the coast of Florida" and (Nixon) "whether it is in Berlin or Cuba . . . Americans will not tolerate being pushed around." Proceeding from such stalwart first principles, it should be easy to make the complex problems of Cuba and agrarian reform insoluble.

A Pourboire for Peru

Both parties in their platforms are forced to pay lip service at least to welfare state principles which most of our press a quarter century ago was denouncing as communistic, and which one unregenerate wing of the Republican party still regards as subversive. But neither the leaders nor the rank-and-file seem to have sufficient sympathy and imagination to see that the Cuban people under Fidel Castro are struggling with similar aspirations against similar influences for a belated New Deal of their own. To one who well remembers the exciting idealism of New Deal Washington and found the same spirit of construction and devotion in Fidel Castro's Havana, it was appalling to come home and to encounter such unkind and ungenerous attitudes toward a less fortunate, small neighboring country. If the candidates cannot do any better than pander to oversimplified stereotypes and stimulate tough guy attitudes where patience is required, they may come to seem in Latin America as unthinking and tactless as Eisenhower who conferred the Legion of Merit on Peru's dictator, Odria, in 1954 and now rewards Peru with a $53,200,000 loan a few days after it agreed to sponsor the motion we wanted to transfer the Cuban question from the United Nations to the Organization of American States. To Latin Americans, this *pourboire* to Peru and these first campaign statements on Cuba will seem again to show a rich neighbor's obtuseness.

Not Only in Cuba

"Unlike the Anglo-Americans, the Latin Americans are not the heirs of a primarily capitalist tradition. Long schooled in the doctrine that certain economic activities must be carried out and controlled by the central government, they find it difficult to accept the preachments of Washington that capitalism is the only means by which they can improve their living conditions. . . . If adequate private capital and technology are not made available from outside Latin America, governments, even in those countries where in the past private efforts have played a major role, may find it necessary to establish and operate productive enterprises themselves. The result may not, almost certainly will not, be the adoption of Soviet Communism, but it may well take the form of intensified social action along nationalist lines. . . .

"Aid from the good partner to the north would be welcomed in the form of private capital, but such capital must not seek to monopolize the resources of the Latin American peoples or claim a privileged status above the national laws. But much of the U.S. insistence upon private entrepeneurial action is galling to the Latin Americans. They consider it inadequate to meet their programs of economic diversification."

—Donald M. Dozer: Are We Good Neighbors? Univ. of Florida Press. Prof. Dozer was a State Dept. official on Latin American affairs from 1944 to 1955.

The fear that Cuba might be turned into a Russian base is natural. But the way to meet this danger is not to make the Cubans feel we have no sympathy for their problems and leave them no alternative but to increase their dependence on the Soviet bloc. After the overthrow of Machado in 1933, the Foreign Policy Association appointed a Commission on Cuban Affairs which turned in a report *The Problems of the New Cuba* which still makes enlightening reading. It would be good if an independent commission on the eve of a new Administration could again take a fresh look at our Cuban relations. We know too little of the first few months after Castro came to power when he turned eagerly to the United States for help. The Cubans claim that the only response was a cold shoulder. When the new regime took office in January, 1959, it found that Batista had looted the Treasury and left Cuba's dollar reserves perilously low. The Cubans say that even their first requests for minor financial accommodations were turned down. They cite as examples a request to the Ex-Im Bank for a $3,000,000 to $4,000,000 loan for road building equipment and a proposed $1,000,000 barter deal of Cuban chrome for corn to meet a food shortage.

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No Official Welcome for Fidel

In February, 1959, one month after taking power, Fidel sent a 3-man mission to Washington under Dr. Justo Carillo, then head of the Cuban Development Bank, to explore the possibility of financial aid to bolster up Cuba's depleted exchange reserves and to make possible a program of industrialization. The mission was cordially received but went away empty-handed. Fidel wanted to visit the U.S. but could not get an official invitation. When he finally came in April, 1959, it was in response to an unofficial invitation. The President, who has welcomed some of the most unsavory little dictators in this capital, did not receive the hero of the Cuban revolution. The Secretary of State met him in a hotel room rather than at the State Department to emphasize that he was not being received officially. Fidel brought along his Ministers of Economics and Finance and the president of the Cuban National Bank. In their "courtesy calls" on their opposite numbers in the American government they hoped that they would be asked how the U.S. could help them. Again all they got were hand-shakes. The month after their return empty-handed they passed a law for the confiscation of property belonging to Batista supporters and then in June they finally enacted the Agrarian Reform. The sequence of events, and the Cubans themselves, suggest that if they had received some help from Washington the agrarian reform could have been slower and less drastic. As late as February of this year, Castro offered to renew negotiations with the U.S. over compensation for expropriated U.S. properties if during the talks we did nothing to damage the Cuban economy (i.e. to cut the Cuban sugar quota) but drew a turn-down. All this calls for impartial re-examination if wiser policies are to be charted.

War with Cuba would be folly. To invade would bog us down in a prolonged guerrilla war. To sell Latin America the idea of a joint naval blockade to shut off Soviet oil and other supplies will be difficult since the other Latins themselves are doing an increasing business with the Soviets. Cuba is not Guatemala. Sooner or later we are going to have to negotiate. Both sides have a stake in the restoration of friendly relations. We are going to have to see the problems of Cuba through Cuban eyes if peace is to be made. The anti-Americanism, we will have to understand, is not just demagogy. Much of Cuba's problems was created by U.S. policy. We think we liberated Cuba but one need only dip into an authoritative work on the Spanish-American war like Walter Millis's *The Martial Spirit* or Carleton Beals' classic, *The Crime of Cuba,* to see that we ended by fraternizing with the Spaniards rather than the Cubans. The land laws imposed under the U.S. occupation wiped out the communal lands and laid the foundations for the vast latifundia under U.S. corporate ownership which made so many Cubans landless (See *Problems of The New Cuba,* 1935, pps. 51-52). When Machado was overthrown in 1933, and a new government under Dr. Grau San Martin initiated a moderate program of social and agrarian reform, FDR's emissary Sumner Welles forced it out of office and put Batista in power behind Mendieta. (See box on page three). Our dislike for reformers runs as a consistent thread through our relations with Cuba. Batista's *coup d'etat* in March, 1952, when he saw that he could not win a free election, was made three days after the Army had been strengthened by a U.S. military assistance pact.

On Those Red Subs Seen Off Cuba

Senator [Roman L.] HRUSKA (R. Neb.): General, we had testifying before us in open session some months ago Pedro Diaz Lanz, and he gave testimony regarding indications that Communist military supplies were furnished to the Castro forces. Can you tell us anything about the extent to which such aid was provided through those sources?

General [C. P.] CABELL [deputy director CIA]: I could not offhand. I have not seen any information such aid was given. . . .

Senator HRUSKA: There was also testimony with reference to submarines, Russian submarines, having been observed in Cuban waters. . . . Can you tell us anything about those?

General CABELL: We have been unable to verify any such reports.

—*Senate Internal Security Committee, Nov. 5, 1959.*

Eastland's Cuban Nightmares and the CIA View of Fidel Castro's Politics

The CHAIRMAN [Senator Eastland]: It is said that roughly 750 North Korean and Communist Chinese fought with the Castro forces. These people were not seen in the cities of Cuba, but were kept in the interior of Cuba. Do you have any knowledge of that?

General C. P. CABELL [Deputy Director, Central Intelligence Agency]: No, sir; we do not, and we would seriously doubt the authenticity of any such figure. We have no evidence of any participation in the revolution. Nor do we have any knowledge of Chinese Communist No. 1 participation.

The CHAIRMAN: All right. What do you have information about? About what Communists fought in Castro's forces?

General CABELL: In Cuba?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, sir.

General CABELL: That question is related to the question. Is Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro a Communist? Let me develop that thought for you, sir. Our information shows that the Cuban Communists do not consider him a Communist Party member, or even a pro-Communist . . . the Communists consider Castro as a representative of the bourgeoisie, and were unable to gain public recognition or commitments from him during the course of the revolution.

We know that the Communists were concerned when, at the time of his trip to the United States, he showed evidence of a friendly attitude toward the United States . . . Through their overt propaganda organs, radio and television commentary, and selective or false news reporting the Communists hope to shield Fidel, and the Cuban people, from news favorable to U.S. policies, and to exploit news favorable to the U.S. . . . In terms of mass following, they [the Communists] still represent a minority, though a very well organized one . . . Within the 26th of July movement [Castro's] there is considerable evidence of opposition to communism. . . .

Senator [Olin] JOHNSTON [D. S.C.] Is it not true that he, Fidel, is more dangerous than if he would come out and let them know that he was a Communist?

General CABELL: I personally would agree that Castro would probably lose much, or even most, of his popular support should this occur. However, we believe that Castro is not a member of the Communist Party, and does not consider himself to be a Communist.

—*Senate Internal Security Committee, Nov. 5, 1959.*

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We recognized the new regime March 27, 1952, on the ground that the Cuban people had "acquiesced" in the seizure of power although the presidents of both houses of the Cuban Congress had denounced it and three days before recognition a petition had been filed with the Constitutional Court asking that the new regime be declared illegal. The petition was filed by a bold, young lawyer. His name was Fidel Castro.

A Propaganda Campaign Like Stalin's

I agree with Leo Huberman and Paul M. Sweezy in their admirable and indispensable new book, "Cuba: Anatomy of A Revolution" (Monthly Review Press, 66 Barrow Street, New York 14, $3.50) that Castro is our Tito. Just as Washington came to the aid of a rebel against Moscow, so Moscow has come to the aid of a rebel against Washington. One of Khrushchov's wisest moves was when he made his peace with Belgrade and some day we are going to have to swallow a similar pill and make our peace with Havana. We are as quick to equate with Communism any disposition to question our free enterprise party line as Stalin was to equate with Fascism any deviation from his. One need only read Tad Szulz's current series in the *New York Times* on Cuba to see that his attempt to find a Red menace in Cuba and a popular revolt against Castro is just about as thin as the evidence Communist party hacks tried to marshal against Tito.

Those who are not blinded by Red menace and cold war stereotypes cannot help but see and feel in Cuba the love and devotion which the masses feel for Fidel. Should anything happen to him, he will live on as an inspiration to the poor and their champions in Latin America. I did not meet him but I heard him on TV July 19 while a Cuban friend translated. He marshals his arguments and facts with the capacity and precision of a great lawyer. Of the top echelon I met only Che Guevara with whom I had an off the record talk at the National Bank. This self-exiled Argentinian physician of 32 who knows at first hand the terrible poverty of the Latin American peasants and *Indios* is extraordinary in his beauty (there is no other word for it), his simplicity and his sobriety. From my meeting with Dr. Guevara and from the biographies of the top leadership, I believe the young men around Fidel are as unusual and gifted a group as those who made our own American Revolution and those who wrote the Constitution. Only the myopic folly that afflicts the comfortable stand-patters in every revolutionary age could lead us to see them as "a bevy of beatniks" (*Wall Street Journal*, July 29).

I ended my last letter on a note of suspense after telling of my visit to Havana's most notorious shanty-town squatter settlement "Las Yaguas" where the residents insisted that the mysterious numbers and letters on their miserable homes were the block and house numbers of new dwellings being prepared for them by the government. I solved the mystery two days later at the Social Welfare Ministry where I found a division in charge of planning the replacement of these slums and saw the blueprints for the ten settlements which will replace "Las Yaguas". The official in charge was a Senora Concha Ferrer, who was with Fidel in the rebel army where her job was organizing schools among the peasants in the Sierra Maestri. Her second-in-command was a young sociologist, Dr. Alvan H. Sanchez. They had made a comprehensive study of the

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The Last Time Cuba Tried Land Reform

"During its four months in office [in 1933 after the fall of Machado], the Grau government enacted . . . an 8-hour day . . . a minimum wage for cutting sugar cane . . . the initiation of a program for agrarian reform . . . a reduction in electricity rates. . . . The Grau government aroused intense hostility on the part of business interests. . . . Mr. Sumner Welles, the American Ambassador, was strongly opposed to the regime, and the U.S. refused to recognize it. . . . In January 1934 the army [newly led by Batista] . . . finally turned against Grau, who was forced to resign . . . The resentment of many Cubans has been increased by the accusation that the Mendieta coalition, which succeeded Grau, was and is largely the creature of American diplomacy. It is pointed out that Washington extended recognition to President Mendieta five days after he took office, although it had denied recognition to President Grau, who stayed in office four months."

—Problems of the New Cuba, Report of the Commission on Cuban Affairs, Foreign Policy Association, 1935, Senator Gruening of Alaska was a member.

From the Raul Castro Land Reform Speech Which Is Supposed to Prove Him A Red

"The Cuban patriots of 1895, under the leadership of Marti and Maceo, aspired to something more than liberation from Spain. They wanted to bring about economic and social changes here. . . . Marti knew that the concentration of land in the hands of a few not only engendered injustice, inequality and distress but that it also caused permanent political upheavals. . . .

"The independence of our country will never become complete unless it is based on economic liberation. And in this modern world, economic freedom means agrarian diversification, industrialization, the breaking up of commercial monopolies—all that which had been forecast by the genius of Jose Marti; all that . . . must be based in Cuba on a complete transformation of the land ownership system, on the Land Reform; and on the Reform of the Customs System that protects our incipient industries. . . .

"In order to develop its industries Cuban must have an internal market, and there can be no Cuban market if half the population of Cuba, that is to say, the small farmers and agricultural workers, live in abject poverty. For example, Cuba's present-day footwear industry has a production capacity of almost 30 million pairs of shoes of every type. Yet it must be inactive much of the year and because there is no market only 14 to 16 million pairs of shoes are produced.

"When, through the Land Reform, all Cuban farmers will have an adequate income, the footwear industry, the cigar industry, the textile and garment industry, the canning industry, all of these will prosper. . . . The Land Reform is a starting point for the progress of Cuban industry; and we are sure that there will be many wealthy Cubans, Cubans with useful wealth, who will see it in this light."

—The text of this speech by Major Raul Castro, Fidel's brother, before the first Forum on Land Reform, was translated from the June 30, 1959, issue of Revolucion, organ of the July 26 movement, and inserted by Spruille Braden in his testimony July 17, 1959, before the Senate Internal Security Committee as proof of his assertion, "I am not 100 percent positive that Fidel himself is a Communist . . . his brother is." The text, at pages 259-72, of Part V, of the committee's hearings on "Communist Threat to the U.S. Through the Caribbean" hardly supports the charge.—IFS

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Fidel and His Young Men Comparable in Ability to Our Leaders of 1776

(*Continued from Page Three*)

squatter settlement and of the human resources buried in it. They did an occupational survey and found many men with skilled building trades experience in "Las Yaguas". Their plans call for the breaking up of the settlement into ten scattered sections to end gangster rule among the squatters. They plan to enlist the people in making their own homes and the prefabricated concrete blocks with which to construct them. The new settlements will be adjacent to new factories to be established by INRA, the agrarian reform agency, to provide employment. Each settlement will have its school and recreation centers. They took me to see a smaller squatter settlement and the new community its inhabitants were already building for themselves. Everything is planned with an eye to participation, self-help and the restoration of self-respect.

New Style Revolutionary Incitements

I have curtailed travelogue the better to plead for understanding of Cuba's case in the hateful atmosphere I found here in Washington on my return. I only wish more Americans would go and see for themselves what the new régime is doing before our government finds some excuse to take out on Castro our frustrations about Khrushchov. No one with any sympathy for human suffering, aspiration and devotion can come away from a few days of touring amid the new housing developments urban and rural and among the cooperatives without himself acquiring new hope and faith. I remember among the high points of my own tour the well-to-do small farmer who had left his own farm in care of his son while he took over training and direction of the new mixed cooperative established on one of the properties taken from Batista's family at Los Pinos. I remember the spotless medical clinic with the well-stocked cupboard of medicines at the new cooperative in the miserable and muddy fishing village at Punta del Carta, and the bright eyed young woman doctor in charge, the first the village had ever had. I remember the appeal on the bulletin board asking the villagers to "help your revolutionary government" and the revolutionary acts this "incited". Among them were "burn all trash," "use sanitary latrines", "boil water and milk before using" and "wash your hands and your children's before eating."

One Source of Anti-Americanism

"One element in the picture is clear enough: the disillusionment and distrust felt by democratic leaders in Latin America when the U.S., leader of the 'free' world, provides aid which is so frequently put to internal political use, and thereby underwrites the anti-democratic forces. . . . The mere presence of newly provided U.S. military equipment in the country tends to persuade the people that the U.S. is underwriting the tyranny under which they suffer. The rancor of the victorious forces of Fidel Castro in Cuba against the U.S. military mission and the arms aid program, on the ground that they helped to maintain Batista's tyranny, provides a clear illustration."

—Edwin Lieuwen: Arms and Politics in Latin America, published by Council on Foreign Relations, 1960,

I remember the pride shown by the members of the new tobacco cooperative about 100 miles from Havana named for two revolutionary heroes, the Brothers Saiz: the pastel shaded pre-fabricated houses, the clean new 6-grade school with its spotless kitchens where free lunches are prepared for the children, the new People's Store clean and well-stocked with a wide variety of goods from groceries to pots and pans. Its refrigerators for perishable foodstuffs and its neat shelves of canned goods would attract attention and approval even in a rural town of our own, much less Cuba's. I remember the peasants who had come in from the surrounding neighborhood to shop and to see these new sights. Earlier on the way out I had seen some "bohios", the thatched roof, mud floor, one room hut without water or sanitary facilities which are characteristic of the Cuban country side. Now at the cooperative I visited the one story homes, some with two, others with three bedrooms, built for members of the cooperative. Country folk who had never had a school even for their children were now going to night classes themselves. The bright faces, the cleanliness of the new houses, the gardens around them, were visible signs that the revolution in Cuba was more than rhetorical. And I remember the shy farmer in one of these houses who at the end of an interview when asked what he thought of Castro fell silent. When we were halfway down the walk he cried out after us, "I would die for Fidel."

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